

IMPROVING STUDENTS' COMPETENCE OF READING
COMPREHENSION THROUGH RECIPROCAL TEACHING
STRATEGY

(An Action Research in the Eleventh Grade Students at SMAN
2 Boyolali in the Academic Year of 2011/2012)

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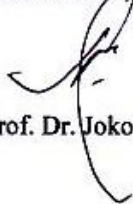
**RECIPROCAL TEACHING: A STRATEGY FOR IMPROVING
READING COMPREHENSION**
(A Scientific Journal)

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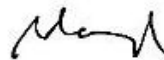
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**Improving Students' Reading Comprehension Through
Reciprocal Teaching Strategy (An Action Research in the Eleventh Grade
Students at SMAN 2 Boyolali in the Academic Year of 2011/2012)**

By

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Abstract

The objectives of the study are: (1) to find out whether the application of reciprocal teaching strategy can improve students' reading comprehension, (2) to find out the effectiveness of reciprocal teaching strategy in the learning of reading comprehension. This research was carried out from July 2011 to May 2012 at SMAN 2 Boyolali. The subjects of the research are the students of grade XI Social 3 which consist of 14 male students and 17 female ones. The type of study is a classroom action research. The procedures are based on Elliot's model. Research data are obtained through three techniques: observation, interview, and documentation. There are two kinds of data: qualitative and quantitative. Qualitative data were analyzed by using technique of qualitative description analysis, while quantitative data were analyzed by using technique of comparative description analysis. The study shows that reciprocal teaching strategy gives two positive effects: (1) the test result in each cycle shows that students made a positive improvement. The average scores in pre-test, cycle 1, cycle 2, and cycle 3 are respectively 56.39, 60.13, 64.65, 68.26. So the percentage of improvement in the average score is 21.05%. It shows that the percentage of improvement from pre-test to post-test in cycle 3 is significant. (2) The learning process runs effectively. Most students participated well and actively during the learning process. They were motivated to take part in the instructional activity. Moreover, they were eager to work cooperatively. The observation result shows that in the first cycle 74.19% students were actively involved in the learning process. While in the second and the third cycle, 77.42% and 74.19% students were actively involved in the learning process. And in accordance with the criteria of the effectiveness of reciprocal teaching in the learning process, it can be concluded that the learning process is effective because more than 70% students actively involved in the learning process.

Key words: Reading Comprehension, Reciprocal Teaching Strategy, Summarizing, Questioning, Clarifying, and Predicting

I. Introduction

Among four language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing), reading is the most important skill as stated by Carrel: For many students, reading is by far the most important of the four skills in a second language, particularly in English as a second or foreign language. (Carrel in Carrel et. Al. 1988: 1)

Furthermore, based on the content standard of the curriculum of English education in Indonesia, the aim of the teaching of reading in Senior High School is that students have competence to comprehend variety of text in order to be able to participate in the various contexts of society and to access science and technology. In addition, reading material takes the most portions in language testing. For example in national examination, up to now only two language skills are tested nationally, that is, listening and reading, in which the testing material consists of 70% reading comprehension. Finally, reading plays an important role in increasing man's way of life.

Reading, indeed, is very essential in a language classroom. However, the competence of the students' reading comprehension, especially the eleventh grade students of SMAN 2 Boyolali in the academic year of 2011/2012, is still low. This can be seen from the result of the students' first mid semester test in the academic year of 2011/2012. Its average score is 46.68. The other supporting data indicating the students' problem in reading comprehension was shown by the students' result of pretest of reading comprehension. Its average score is 56.39.

Beside the students' low achievement in reading comprehension, reality shows that the students' involvement in the learning process is also still low. Most of the fellow teachers teaching the students often complain about the students' lack of motivation in joining the learning process. Most students of the the social program often neglected tasks the teachers gave them. During the learning process, only few of them actively participated in the learning activity.

The described condition is, of course, a problem in the learning process, especially in the learning of reading. After doing some observation, the writer got a conclusion that the problem appears due to some causes. Among others are (1) the lack of students' motivation, (2) the lack of opportunities for collaboration, and (3) the lack of opportunities to use reading strategies directly.

Based on the causes of the problem, then, the writer decides to overcome the students' problem of reading comprehension by applying reciprocal teaching strategy. Reciprocal Teaching is an instructional approach designed to increase reading comprehension by encouraging students to use reading strategies. Reading comprehension strategies typically used in reciprocal teaching are summarizing, questioning, clarifying, and predicting (Palincsar and Brown 1984).

Furthermore, the writer focused the study on two questions: (1) whether the application of reciprocal teaching can improve the reading comprehension competence of students gradeXI Social 3 at SMAN 2 Boyolali

in the academic year of 2011/2012, and how effective the learning of reading comprehension is when reciprocal teaching strategy is applied to students grade XI Social 3 at SMAN 2 Boyolali in the academic year of 2011/2012?

This study is generally aimed at improving reading comprehension competence of students grade XI Social 3 at SMAN 2 Boyolali in the academic year of 2011/2012 through the application of reciprocal teaching strategy.

And specifically, it is aimed at obtaining information of these matters: (1) Whether the application of reciprocal teaching strategy can improve reading comprehension competence of students grade XI Social 3 at SMAN 2 Boyolali in the academic year of 2011/2012, and (2) How reciprocal teaching strategy is effective in the learning of reading comprehension for students grade XI Social 3 at SMAN 2 Boyolali in the academic year of 2011/2012.

As stated above, that one of the causes of why students have low competence in reading comprehension is the lack of their motivation. Students have low motivation because they think negatively about learning. They feel they get nothing from learning. Therefore, to solve the problem of motivation teacher needs to provide learning instruction which can improve students' motivation.

Beside motivation, collaboration also plays an important role in the success of the learning of reading. Opportunities for collaboration are one of the four components that can lead student to be successful in the learning of

reading as stated by Fielding and Pearson (1994). By working collaboratively, students gain access to each other's thinking processes and teach one another effective reading strategies (O'Malley and Pierce. 1995: 95). Teacher needs to create instructional strategy which enables students to work collaboratively.

The third cause why the students' competence in reading comprehension is still low is the lack of opportunities to teach reading strategies directly. Fielding and Pearson (1994) reported that one of the more important findings to emerge from research on reading instruction over the last fifteen years is that reading comprehension can be increased by teaching comprehension strategies directly. In fact, Fielding and Pearson found that: in some studies, less able readers who had been taught a comprehension strategy were indistinguishable from more able readers who had not been taught the strategy directly. (O'Malley and Pierce.1995: 95). Therefore, teacher needs to apply instructional strategy which enables students to use reading strategies directly.

Based on the above description, the writer, then, decides to overcome the students' problem of reading comprehension by applying reciprocal teaching strategy. By applying the strategy, the students' competence of reading comprehension can be improved because the application of reciprocal teaching strategies makes students active. Their activeness in the learning process indicates the improvement of their motivation. The increase of students' motivation will improve their learning achievement.

Besides, reciprocal teaching strategy requires collaboration. Collaboration means cooperative learning. In such learning, students directly involved. Students' involvement in the learning process will accelerate them in achieving the instructional goals because students will learn well when they are involved. In this case David Vale and Anne Feunteun (1995) write:

What is known is that children learn best when they are involved, and when their work is valued. They learn best when they are the owners of their work-when they have the opportunity to experience and experiment for themselves (Vale and Feunteun 1995:28)

In addition, collaboration can lead students' success in reading comprehension. Fielding and Pearson (1994) stated that reading programs having the following four components can lead to student success: (1) extensive amounts of time in grade for reading, (2) direct strategy instruction in reading comprehension, (3) opportunities for collaboration, and (4) opportunities for discussions on responses to reading.

Furthermore, reciprocal teaching strategy will increase students' competence in reading comprehension because in the application of reciprocal teaching strategy, students directly use reading strategies, namely, summarizing, questioning, clarifying, and predicting. Meanwhile the direct use of reading strategy is one of the four components which can lead students' success in reading comprehension as stated by Fielding and Pearson above.

II. Research Method

A. Research Setting

This classroom action research on reciprocal teaching was carried out at SMAN 2 Boyolali. The school lies at Jl. Tentara Pelajar 06, Kebonbimo, Tlatar, Boyolali. The research was carried out for about 10 months. It was held from July 2011 to May 2012. In July 2011, the writer did pre survey. Composing research proposal was done in the late of August to September 26th 2011. Research activities for cycle 1 were done from September to November. Research activities for cycle 2 were done from December 2011 to February 2012. While Research activities for cycle 3 was done from February 2012 to May 2012. The subjects of the research are students of grade XI Social 3 which consist of 14 male students and 17 female ones.

B. Research Procedures

The procedure used in this research is based on Elliot's model which is described in spiral cycle division. The following are the procedures:

- (1) initial reflection (identifying problems); the problem identified is students' low competence in reading comprehension.
- (2) Fact finding analysis; the identified problem appears due to the following causes: lack of motivation, lack of opportunities for collaboration, and lack of opportunities to use reading strategies directly.

- (3) Planning; the problem is overcome by applying reciprocal teaching strategy in the learning process.
- (4) Acting; it is the implementation of reciprocal teaching. In small group of four to five, students begin by all reading the first paragraph or passage of the same text silently. Based on the teacher's modeling, one student begins the session by summarizing the paragraph in his or her own words. Then he or she asks the group one question about the content and identifies a comprehension problem or something that was difficult to comprehend about the passage. Finally, the students predict what will come in the next paragraph or section. Each student gets a turn to repeat these steps.
- (5) Observing; The aim of the observation is to get a clear description of the class situation during the application of the reciprocal teaching.
- (6) Reflecting; Reflection is a part of discussion phase and research analysis after the carrying out of the action. It is carried out in order to know the strength and the weakness of the action. By doing reflection, the researcher can decide what to do for the next action to continue the improvement. The form of the model is described in spiral cycle division.

C. Techniques of Data Collection

The writer used three techniques to collect data, namely observation, interview, and documentation. Observation is a technique of collecting data by observing what activity is happening. In this study, the writer – as the researcher – acted as participative observer taking part in the

activity of reciprocal teaching, as well as passive observer acting as data collector and activity recorder. The observation is focused on the application of reciprocal teaching. Therefore, the researcher prepares reciprocal teaching notes.

Interview is a technique to know a certain classroom situation (Hopkins as taken by Rochiati, 2008: 117) Meanwhile, Denzin in Goetz and LeCompte (1984) states that interview is questions that are orally asked to those who can give necessary information (Rochiati, 2008: 117). In this study, the researcher interviewed students as subjects of the study. The researcher also interviewed collaborators or other English teachers who are asked as observers. The interview was held after the application of reciprocal teaching. By using an interview guide, the researcher asked the respondents opinion about reciprocal teaching.

Documentation or documentary study is a technique of data collection by gathering and analyzing documents (Sukmadinata. 2008:221). The documents needed in this study are the result of the students' English pre test and post test in each cycle. The researcher also used the reciprocal teaching notes and the created dialogs to analyze the effectiveness of the learning process.

C. Techniques of Data Analysis

There are two forms of data, namely, qualitative data and quantitative data. Qualitative data is the description of students' activeness

which is obtained by observing the students' activity during the learning process. While quantitative data is the students' achievement of reading comprehension. The qualitative data were analyzed by using the technique of qualitative description analysis. In this technique, the researcher observed, interpreted, and analyzed the collected qualitative data during the application of reciprocal teaching strategy, then compared the result to the condition of students' learning activity before the application of reciprocal teaching.

The quantitative data were analyzed by using the technique of comparative description analysis. In this technique, the researcher compared the students' achievement of reading comprehension in pre test and in each cycle during the application of reciprocal teaching strategy. Finally, the pre-test result is compared with the students' scores after the application of reciprocal teaching strategy in the last cycle.

III. Discussion of the Research Findings

Based on research findings from cycle 1 up to cycle 3, there are two important points as the result of applying reciprocal teaching strategy in the learning of reading comprehension. The first finding is the improvement of students' competence in their reading comprehension. The second finding is the effectiveness of the learning process.

1. The improvement of students' competence in reading comprehension

The study to prove that reciprocal teaching strategy can improve students' competence in reading comprehension was conducted in three

cycles. To know the improvement of students' reading comprehension, the researcher conducted post test in each cycle. Reading texts used are based on the materials stated in the curriculum. Based on the research schedule, the text types presented within the cycles are analytical exposition in cycle 1, narrative in cycle 2, and spoof in cycle 3.

The findings of this study show that the use of reciprocal teaching strategy can improve students' competence in reading comprehension. It is because the four reading comprehension strategies (summarizing, questioning, predicting, and clarifying) which are typically used in reciprocal teaching give students chance to work collaboratory, learn actively and effectively, and activate their schemata.

In summarizing strategy, students are encouraged to see how an idea is developed and a text is structured, to draw inferences, and to effectively tie new ideas to prior topics (Richards. p. 273). In questioning strategy, students are encouraged to learn actively and effectively. In predicting strategy, students are encouraged to think about what they are going to read based on clues from the reading.

Clarifying is an activity that is particularly important when working with students who have a history of comprehension difficulty. When the students are asked to clarify, their attention is called to the fact that there may be many reasons why text is difficult to understand. They are taught to be alert to the effects of such impediments to comprehension

and to take the necessary measures to restore meaning (e.g., reread, ask for help). (info@ncrel.org)

The improvement of students' reading comprehension can be recognized from the results of students' test of reading comprehension. The improvement could be seen from the students' scores from cycle to cycle. The average scores in pre-test, cycle one, cycle two, and cycle three are respectively 56.39, 60.13, 64.65, and 68.26. So the percentages of improvement in the average scores in cycle one, cycle two, and cycle three are respectively 6.63%, 7.52%, and 5.58%. Therefore, the percentage of improvement in the average score from pretest to cycle 3 is 21.05%.

2. The effectiveness of reciprocal teaching in the learning process

During the implementation of reciprocal teaching strategy, there was a significant change in classroom situation. Based on the observation result (the created dialogs and the reciprocal teaching notes), in cycle one 74.19% students involved actively in the learning process. Meanwhile, in cycle two and three, the percentages of the students' active involvement in the learning process are 77.42% and 74.19%. Reciprocal teaching strategy can make students learn effectively. This is because in the application of reciprocal teaching strategy, students directly use reading strategies, namely, summarizing, questioning, clarifying, and predicting.

The reading comprehension strategies typically used in reciprocal teaching require students' activism in the learning process. This makes

students actively involved in the learning process. Consequently, their motivation will arise. In short, the implementation of reciprocal teaching strategy can improve the effectiveness of the learning process.

IV. Conclusion and Implication

Based on the above discussions, it can be concluded that reciprocal teaching strategy is able to improve students' competence of reading comprehension. This is so because reciprocal teaching gives students opportunities to use reading strategies directly. Besides, the four reading comprehension strategies which are typically used in reciprocal teaching (summarizing, questioning, predicting, and clarifying) give students chance to work collaboratory, to learn actively and effectively, and to activate their schemata.

The other conclusion is that the implementation of reciprocal teaching strategy in the learning of reading comprehension can make students learn effectively. The indicators of the effective learning are: (1) students' enthusiasms in involving themselves in the learning process, (2) students' engagement in cooperative learning, (3) students' high motivation in taking part the learning process, (4) students' active participation during the learning process, and (5) students' responsibility in doing their tasks.

Theoretically, these research findings support the previous studies about the effectiveness of reciprocal teaching in the learning of reading comprehension. Reciprocal teaching strategy is obviously appropriate with the

students' need of real use of language. It gives some positive effects not only on the students' competence, but also on their attitude and motivation. Therefore, using reciprocal teaching strategy is strongly suggested for teachers to improve their students' reading comprehension.

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